

Voices of Hope

It was May when Jody Thomasson came up with the idea for this column. Wouldn't it be great to hear from a variety of folks in the parish about what brings them hope in these difficult times, she asked. Almost every week since then, we've read reflections about hope in this newsletter. That focus, looking for hope, subtly shaped my summer as each week I was asking someone else to consider writing about it. Hope glimmered around the edges of a summer that lacked all the familiar routines. I saw bits of hope in strange places. I found myself drawn regularly to witness the progress being made on the new public library. It seemed tangible, a daily physical representation of something new and communal, taking shape right in front of us. One morning during my walk over the Higgins Street Bridge I was surprised to see a large log wedged right in the middle of the Clark Fork. Somehow the four Mergansers who were taking advantage of the opportunity to sun themselves, felt like hope to me. In the midst of these small and strange daily reminders I am held by images of Scripture. Lately, Jesus as the Good Shepherd has become even more meaningful. The intimacy between shepherd and sheep, the way in which the sheep respond, recognizing the shepherd's voice, bespeaks a familiarity and a comfort that are life giving and full of hope. The Good Shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When I imagine Jesus whispering my name, our names, I am full of hope indeed.

Reverend Gretchen Strohmaier